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871 Austrian Galicia they underwent a great cultural revival in
563 the latter part of the nineteenth century, and this was the only area in which schools and universities using the Polish language could develop freely. The Polish population in Prussia lived under better educational conditions than did their co-nationals in Russia, but in both countries they were subjected to vigorous programs of denationalization.

871 The state of popular education in Eastern Europe is re-
212 vealed by illiteracy figures for the years 1920-21, before the new independent states had exerted an influence on education. The rate of illiteracy for males and females of school age and over was 7 per cent for Czechoslovakia, 15 per cent for Hungary, and between 30 and 40 per cent for Poland and Yugoslavia. The rate was between 40 and 50 per cent for Rumania and Bulgaria, and in Albania it was much higher. These figures may be compared with illiteracy rates of under 1 per cent for Great Britain and Germany, 6 per cent for the United States, and about 50 per cent for Russia.

[873] It is worth noting that the low level of literacy in most of Eastern Europe did not prevent the development of a high level of culture among educated persons. The universities of Prague, Cracow, and Budapest were the most distinguished among many of high level, and very significant contributions to European culture in the arts and sciences came from this region. The "intelligentsia," as those with higher education and professional skills were referred to, provided both the leadership of the national movements and the statesmen of the nations born at the end of the First World War. As individuals they were the equals of the political leaders of the great powers and included in their number many great Europeans.

•566 Agricultural improvement, or the increase in produc-
423 tivity and in the welfare of the population dependent on
178 agriculture, is a complex process. In Eastern Europe, it involved in particular the release of the peasants from feudal

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servitude, the adoption of improved techniques of agricultural production and marketing, and the improvement of the lot of the individual peasant through land reform and the combined efforts of the landlords and the state. Most of European Turkey had never known feudalism in the Western sense, and the peasants of Serbia and Bulgaria emerged early as independent landowners with a sound understanding of their own interests. In many areas of Rumania, Austria-Hungary, and the Polish sections of Germany and Russia, however, the peasants were freed from feudal restrictions only to sink into a deeper misery, sometimes called "neo-serfdom," that stemmed from lack of capital and the resultant economic dependency on the landlords. As a consequence, while independent peasant political parties began to develop among the Czechs and southern Slavs shortly after the turn of the century, the peasants in Russia in 1905 and in Rumania in 1907 resorted to the desperate method of revolution.

The agrarian backwardness that characterized the greater part of Eastern Europe was a great challenge to social and political philosophers, and it was not surprising that the First World War left in its wake attempts at radical solutions by leaders acting in the name of the proletariat or the peasantry. The recommendation of the economists, in the presence of this agrarian poverty and overpopulation, was that agricultural improvement be accompanied by the extension of industry and trade. In the areas where large landowners exercised full political control, this recommendation was not welcomed as the landowners tended to favor fiscal policies that kept the price of grain high and the peasant poor. In other areas, however, important industrial development took place. Thus, the Austrian provinces of Bohemia and Moravia, with their preponderant Czech population, accounted for a little over one half the entire industrial output of Austria-Hungary. This production included coal and

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565 visible and constitute an outstanding characteristic of this 182 group.

The third point in this discussion of the peasantry concerns the special characteristics of the Eastern European peasantry which have enabled it to maintain a separate political organization. It can be said safely that nowhere in Europe have the characteristics peculiar to peasant society been so well preserved as in this region. Although numerical supremacy has been a factor in the preservation of peasant society, more important is the fact that the peasants of Eastern Europe have manifested in recent history a tremendous self-consciousness, political maturity, and determined will to create political and social organizations of their own, which, so far, have not been emulated by the peasantry in other parts of the globe. The peasantry of Western European countries, such as Spain, Portugal, or Italy, often comprises over 50 per cent of the rural population. However, this Western peasantry has never been able to generate powerful and influential peasant political organizations, nor has it been able to play an outstanding role in national life as has the peasantry of Eastern Europe.

II

566 The greater part of the peasantry in Eastern Europe was liberated from the bondages of serfdom in the year of revolutions, 1848. In that part of Poland which was included in the Russian Empire, the abolition of serfdom was proclaimed in 1861, and in Old Rumania, in 1864. The peasants of the Balkans, subjected to a special type of land tenure relations and vassalage as practiced in the Ottoman empire, were freed gradually with the withdrawal of the Turkish political power, especially after the arrangements made at the Congress of Berlin in 1878.

000 The liberation of the peasantry was a consequence of